

Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 234333

LIMDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT TEGUCIGALPA 4446 ACTION SECSTATE INFO
GUATEMALA MANAGUA SAN JOSE SAN SALVADOR 28 NOV

QUOTE

S E C R E T TEGUCIGALPA 4446

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, ES, HO

SUBJ: FONMIN BATRES' REACTION TO GOES MOVES

REF: STATE 233087

SUMMARY. FONMIN BATRES STATES THAT GOH INTERPRETS GOES
ACTION IN DENOUNCING BOGOTA PACT AND HONDURAN ACTIONS
IN CURRENT TALKS AS DRASTIC AND UNWISE. HE INTERPRETS
IT AS MOVE TO DISCONTINUE TALKS, WHICH IN FACT GALINDO
POHL HAD ALREADY SECRETLY RECOMMENDED TO HIM IN MEXICO.
GOH WILL NOT SUSPEND TALKS. GOES ACTION CAME AS SURPRISE
AND HAS NOT BEEN OFFICIALLY COMMUNICATED TO GOH
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NEGOTIATORS.

END SUMMARY.

1. FONMIN BATRES RECEIVED ME AND DCM TODAY AND GAVE HIS REACTION, WHICH WAS ONE OF CONSIDERABLE IRRITATION, TO LATEST SALVADORAN MOVES ON BILATERAL TALKS.

2. BATRES SAID HE WAS COMPLETELY IGNORANT OF SALVADORAN MOVES UNTIL HE RECEIVED PHONE CALL YESTERDAY MORNING ASKING HIS RETURN TO REGUS FOR CONSULTATION. IN THIS THIRD STAGE OF TALKS TWO GOVERNMENTS WERE FIRST WORKING OUT DIRECTIVES FOR DEALING WITH POINTS AT ISSUE UNDER DIFFERENT HEADINGS. ONLY DIRECTIVE FOR BORDER TALKS REMAINED UNDERMINED BY WEEKEND. BY NOV 26 TWO DELEGATIONS AGREED TENTATIVELY, AND ON NOV 27 DEFINITELY, ON DIRECTIVE RE FRONTIER. IT CALLED FOR DEFINITION IF POSSIBLE OF COMPLETE LINE OF BORDER, FAILING WHICH TWO SIDES WOULD THEN RECOMMEND WAYS TO RESOLVE OUTSTANDING DIFFERENCES.

3. IN RECOUNTING JALAPA MEETING UNDER AEGIS OF SOMOZA, BATRES SAID HE AND LOPEZ HAD MET SEPARATELY WITH MOLINA AND GALINDO POHL. SALVADORANS HAD PROPOSED THAT BORDER BE DELINEATED JOINTLY BY TWO GENERAL STAFFS. BATRES SAID THAT, BACKED "ONE HUNDRED PER CENT" BY LOPEZ, HE HAD REJECTED THIS PROPOSAL IMMEDIATELY FOR TWO REASONS: (A) THE GOH BASED ITS CASE ON LEGAL AND DOCUMENTARY GROUNDS, AND THE NATURE OF THE FACT-FINDING OR NEGOTIATING COMMISSION WAS IRRELEVANT; (B) HE DISTRUSTED THE MILITARY FOR SUCH A TASK SINCE THERE WAS A DANGER IF THEY FAILED THAT THEY WOULD TRANSLATE THEIR FRUSTRATIONS INTO ACTION. HE SAID A THIRD REASON UNVOICED TO SALVADORANS WAS THAT HE FELT THAT HONDURAN ARMED FORCES WOULD REJECT SUCH TASK. (COMMENT: WE HAVE HAD PAST INDICATIONS THAT HONDURANS, PARTICULARLY GEN LOPEZ, DO NOT FAVOR GOES PROPOSALS OF MILITARY DELINATION OF BORDER. SEE VARIOUS 1972-1973 MEMCONS WITH COL CESAR ELVIR.)

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4. INSTEAD, TWO SIDES AGREED ON FOLLOWING PROCEDURE: (A) THEY WOULD REDUCE BORDER DIFFERENCES TO ABSOLUTE MINIMUM IN TALKS IN MEXICO; (B) IF THEY WERE SMALL ENOUGH, THEN EITHER SALVADORANS COULD ACCEPT SOME TYPE OF ARBITRATION OR HONDURANS COULD WORK OUT SOME FORMULA TO COVER THEIR DISPOSITION.

5. HE SAID GOH CONCLUSION ABOUT THIS WAS THAT GOES DID NOT HAVE POLITICAL DESIRE TO SETTLE BORDER PROBLEM. FURTHERMORE, HE FEARED THAT GOES WAS DELIBERATELY ACTING OUT CHARADE IN TALKS, WITH PRIOR PURPOSE OF NOT BRINGING THEM TO FRUITION. IN HIS SECRET CONVERSATIONS WITH GALINDO POHL IN MEXICO THIS TIME, LATTER HAD SAID

THAT TALKS COULD NOT SUCCEED NOW. HE PROPOSED SUSPENDING TALKS INTO APRIL, AND THEN SETTING NEW PERIOD OF THREE MONTHS. THIS WOULD PERMIT SALVADORANS TO GET PAST THEIR ELECTIONS. BATRES REPLIED THAT THIS WAS MOST SERIOUS EFFORT TO DATE TO SOLVE MATTER, AND THAT IF IT WERE ABORTED IT MIGHT TAKE YEARS TO CRANK UP ANOTHER NEGOTIATION. HE TOLD GALINDO ALSO THAT HE (BATRES) AND GOH COULD NOT AFFORD TO POSTPONE THESE TALKS, AS THERE WAS TOO MUCH HEAT AND SUSPICION ABOUT THEM. HE REMINDED GALINDO THAT HE (BATRES) HAS BEEN CALLED A TRAITOR BY THE OPPOSITION EVER SINCE HE SIGNED THE WASHINGTON AGREEMENT, AND THESE ATTACKS WERE CONTINUING.

6. BATRES SAID THAT OBVIOUS GOES AIM WAS TO IMPEL GOH TO BREAK OFF TALKS, BUT THAT GOH WOULD NOT DO SO. HE NOTED THAT TALKS WERE STILL PROGRESSING AND THAT NEITHER HE NOR REMAINING NEGOTIATORS IN MEXICO HAD YET RECEIVED FORMAL WORD OF GOES ACTION. BATRES DEPLORED BAD FAITH OF SALVADORANS IN TAKING DRASTIC STEP SECRETLY, WITHOUT INFORMING HONDURAN NEGOTIATORS EVEN INFORMALLY. GOH WOULD CONTINUE TALKS, ALTHOUGH BATRES FEARED PUBLIC SALVADORAN POSITIONS WOULD CAUSE POPULAR BACKLASH HERE OF ANGER AND DISAPPOINTMENT.

7. HE DOES NOT UNDERSTAND THE SENSE OF THE GOES MOVE. THEIR AVERSION TO ARBITRATION WAS WELL KNOWN, BUT THE BOGOTA PACT HAD NO ENFORCEMENT PROVISIONS FOR A REFUSAL TO ARBITRATE. EVEN HAD THE GOES SO REFUSED, THE ONLY
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EFFECT WOULD BE TO UNDERLINE ITS DISINCLINATION TO SUBJECT TO JUDGMENT. SO WHY DENOUNCE THE PACT?

8. HE SAID THAT GOH WAS AWARE OF OUR NON-INTERVENTION POLICY IN MATTER, BUT HE WANTED USG TO BE CURRENTLY INFORMED AS "PRIME MOVER" OF HEMISPHERE AFFAIRS. HE IS CALLING ALL RESIDENT CHIEFS OF MISSION FOR LESS DETAILED BRIEFING THIS AFTERNOON, AND WILL GO TO GUATEMALA AND COSTA RICA TOMORROW TO EXPLAIN GOH POSITION. HE WILL THEN RETURN TO MEXICO.

9. I ASKED BATRES WHETHER THERE HAD BEEN ANY RECENT BORDER INCIDENTS, AS REPORTED IN TODAY'S CRONISTA. HE REPLIED THERE HAD BEEN A SHOOTOUT LAST WEEKEND. IT HAD INVOLVED MACHINE GUNS INSTEAD OF RIFLES, BUT GOH ATTRIBUTED NO PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE TO IT BECAUSE OF (A) ITS LOCALE, (B) ITS TIMING ON WEEKEND WHEN BOOZING WAS FREQUENT, AND (C) GOES GENERAL STAFF ASSURANCES TO GOH GENERAL STAFF THAT MATTER WAS NOT PLANNED. HE SAID GOH WAS UNHAPPY ABOUT OVERALL COINCIDENCE OF NEW GOES LINE AND RECENT AIRCRAFT ACQUISITIONS, BUT DID NOT SEE ANY REASON TO FEAR SALVADORAN MILITARY ADVENTURE AT THIS

TIME. HOWEVER, STOPPING THESE RECURRING INCIDENTS WAS
PRECISELY THE GOH MOTIVATION TO DEFINE BORDER.

10. I EXPRESSED REGRET AT TURN OF EVENTS, PRAISED BATRES'
PAST EFFORTS TO BRING MATTER TO SOLUTION, AND URGED HIM
TO CONTINUE THESE EXERTIONS IN FUTURE, NO MATTER HOW
DISPIRITING THE IMMEDIATE ATMOSPHERE.

COMMENT: (A) WE RECEIVED REFTEL AFTER THIS CONVERSATION.
OBVIOUSLY BATRES' ACCOUNT CASTS SOME DOUBT ON SALVADORAN
VERSIONS. IT IS PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE, IF
SOME PURPORTED INCIDENT AT TLATELOLCO PRECIPITATED THIS
MOVE, WHY IT WAS NOT IRONED OUT OR AT LEAST VENTILATED
AMONG THE MAIN ACTORS IN MEXICO. BATRES' INTERPRETATION
IS THAT SALVADORANS SIMPLY DECIDED TO MAKE TALKS
IMPOSSIBLE, AND THEN PROCEEDED TO DO SO BY ACTION TAKEN
OUTSIDE THE TALKS. AT ANY RATE, GOH PLANS TO CONTINUE
MEXICO SESSIONS. ORTIZ' VERSION OF BATRES' "BACKING
OUT" IS ALSO INCONSISTENT WITH BATRES' VERSION.

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(B) ORTIZ REQUEST THAT USG DISSUADE GOH FROM MILITARY
ACTION APPEARS DELIBERATE ATTEMPT TO CREATE IMAGINERY
OMINOUS BACKGROUND. WE HAVE NOT THE SLIGHTEST INDICATION
OF ANY SUCH GOH INTENTION, PARTICULARLY IN THE PRESENT
SITUATION WHICH WAS NOT EVEN KNOWN TO LOPEZ UNTIL
SOMOZA
SO INFORMED HIM. NOR IS THERE ANY SIGN THAT MILITARY
CONTACTS BETWEEN TWO SIDES HAVE DISCONTINUED. INDEED,
SUCH CONTACTS SERVED TO
DEFUSE INCIDENT OF LAST WEEKEND. SANCHEZ UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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